Effect of increase in the prices of rice on rice consuming States

411. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Will the Minister of FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the recent hike in the issue price of rice has adversely affected the rice consuming States such as Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal; Karnataka and others;

(b) the reasons for raising the issue price while there is no corresponding rise in the procurement price of paddy or rice; and

(c) whether such a rise in the issue price is likely to benefit the middlemen?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF FOOD AND CIVIL SUPPLIES (SHRI D. L. BAITHA): (a) No, Sir. The Central issue prices are applicable, uniformly, throughout the country.

(b) The Central issue prices of rice were increased on account of the increase in the support prices of paddy for the 1988-89 kharif marketing payable to the farmers.

(c) No, Sir.

Visakhapatnam Steel Plant

412. PROF. C. LAKSHMANNA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that there is a likely delay in the production schedule of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant:

(b) if so, what are the reasons for this delay;

(c) whether it is likely to affect the targeted steel production in the country; if so, in what manner; and

(d) whether this is also likely to necessitate increased imports of steel into the country in the coming years?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTEDAR): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) The main reasons are delay on the part of Andhra Pradesh Government to make water available by the construction of the Yeleru Canal for the plant inadequate peformance of some of the contractors and delay in the supply of certain items of equipment.

(c) and (d) The targetted steel production in the country will go down marginally due to delay in starting production in the Vizag Steel Plant. This may result in consequent additional imports.

Minimum wages for workers

413. SHRI ANAND PRAKASH GAUTAM: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether any guidelines exist for revision of minimum wages of Beedi workers in the country.

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the names of the States where minimum wages of Beedi workers were revised during 1987 and 1988?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF LABOUR AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI RADHAKISHAN MALAVIYA): (a) to (c) The employment in beedi industry falls under the sphere of the State Governments. Each State assesses its local conditions and follows suitable criteria while fixing minimum wages. State Governments have been advised to take into consideration all relevant considerations including the poverty line while fixing the minimum wages. As per available information Govern-

ments of Orissa, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and UP have revised minimum wages of beedi workers during 1987.

Organisations engaged in lab to land programme

414. SHRI ANAND PRAKASH GAUTAM: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the organisations/bodies engaged in disseminating the latest scientific knowledge and technological know-how in the field of agriculture to the farmers;

(b) the details of the magazines/periodicals and other materials being published in this regard; and

(c) the details of the exhibitions/seminars/symposia held for the purpose during the last two years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH AND EDUCATION IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI HARI KRISHNA SHASTRI): (a) The latest scientific knowledge and technical know-how in the field of agriculture are disseminated mainly through the State Departments of Agriculture. The State Agricultural Universities and the ICAR institutes also disseminate technology to farmers through their first-line extension programmes. Some voluntary organisations and input manufacturers are also involved in this work on a limited scale.

(b) All the organisations/bodies mentioned above publish magazines, periodicals, bulletins and pamphlets to disseminate the new agricultural technologies to the farmers. The ICAR publishes five farm magazines viz Indian Farming (monthly), Indian Horticulture (quarterly) Kheti (Monthly) Phal-Phool (quarterly). The Directorate of Extension publishes 6 farm magazines viz Intensive Agriculture, Unnat Krishi, Home Science, Gharni, Oilseeds Newsletter— monthly; Agriculture Extension Review—bimonthly.

(c) In the last two years, the above mentioned organisations have arranged many farmers' fairs, exhibitions, seminars and symposia on a regular basis. Some organisations arrange these activities annually while others in the two major crop seasons (once each in Kharif and rabi seasons). The Directorate of Extension has arranged about 20 seminars and 10 exhibitions in the last two years and is now in the process of organising the National Agriculture Fair at New Delhi. The ICAR organised National Workshop on Lab-to-Land Project at Anand Campus of the Gujarat Agricultural University during the month of February, 1988. Lately ICAR organised three regional Krishi Vigyan Melas at Deeg (Rajasthan), Mandi Adampur (Haryana) and Fatehpur (Uttar Pradesh).

Approval by a Foreign agency for modernisation of Rourkela Steel plant

415. SHRI KAMAL MORARKA: Will the Minister of STEEL AND MINES be pleased to state:

(a) whether any appraisal has been done by a foreign agency for modernisation of Rourkela Steel Plant;

(b) if so, what are the major recommendations; and

(c) whether any foreign/loan is also expected for the modernisation?

THE MINISTER OF STEEL AND MINES (SHRI MAKHAN LAL FOTEDAR): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Kreditanstalt fur Widederaufbau (KFW). The Financial Corporation of West German Government is currently undertaking the appraisal of the project. The recommendations will be known only after the appraisal is over.

(c) Yes, Sir. It is expected that a West German loan may be obtained to finance a part of the cost of modernisation to Rourkela Steel Plant.